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THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE EXCAVATIONS.

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THE title of this paper, "The Old Testament and the Excavations," shows at once that I have nothing new or original to discuss. I am only modestly following a more illustrious example. How much more catching and impressive is the phrase "Babylon and the Bible" with which we have recently become so familiar!² Still I may ask that my slight variation of the theme, by which we surrender the vigor of Delitzsch's expression, be not considered insignificant. I do not use the term "Bible," but "Old Testament," because both necessity and inclination limit me to this the field of my life-work. I do not use the term "Babylon," but "the excavations." This is not, indeed, because I intend to deal with all excavations equally, but because reports come to us, not only from the East, but likewise from the South and the West—and who knows how soon also from the North?—and whatever is scientifically carried out will have value. Again, I do not place the excavations, but the Old Testament, in the foreground, because for me, now as ever, it holds the first place whenever their mutual relations are to be considered. And it is my purpose to maintain this position in the proper spirit and with due limitations.

Only a few months have passed since the reports of Friedrich Delitzsch's paper "Babylon and the Bible" made the rounds through even the most trivial and insignificant of daily papers. Therefore I felt that this assembly had a right to expect from me today a word concerning this very subject. The task was

¹ A paper read before the Theological Conference at Giessen, May 29, 1902.

² The reference is to the famous lecture by PROFESSOR FRIEDRICH DELITZSCH, entitled *Babel und Bibel*, delivered before the emperor of Germany, and published by the J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig, 1902; pp. 52; M. 2. Translated into English by THOMAS J. MCCORMACK, and published by the Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago, under the title *Babel and Bible: A Lecture on the Significance of Assyriological Research for Religion*; pp. 62.

not at all alluring, but whenever I was tempted to shirk it I felt that this and nothing else was my duty. That these impulses were right is proved by the fact that just now two of my colleagues, in a wider and a narrower sense, have discussed this subject, Oettli in Berlin and Hommel at Eisenach, and two others, König³ and Jensen,⁴ have already expressed themselves at length upon it in print, as most of you cannot have failed to notice. Yet it was a gratification to me to discover that my paper, which was completed more than six weeks ago, after going only a short distance the same way, departs wholly from those of my scientific *confrères*. I have therefore abstained even from minor changes, and rejoice doubly that by following an unmistakable impulse, while permitted to speak here on a subject far too extensive for the brief space of an hour, I have conceived my task in just the way I did. And now to the thing in hand!

On the 13th day of January last Friedrich Delitzsch, professor of Assyriology and director of the Vorderasiatische Museum in Berlin, at the request of the German Oriental Society, read in the Academy of Music of that city a paper to which he gave the title "Babylon and the Bible." Probably we should have heard neither more nor less concerning it than in the case of countless other lectures, had not his majesty the emperor been present and become so interested that Professor Delitzsch was permitted to repeat his lecture on the 1st of February in the royal palace. To this circumstance, no doubt, we also owe, as early as the beginning of March, its appearance in print, embellished with fifty illustrations. In the meantime, Professor Delitzsch, with imperial leave of absence and supplied with imperial funds, has gone to Babylon to inspect and further there the German excavations. Let us hope that the worthy scholar will return in good health from the East; for, so far as we can judge from the nature of his publications, his work hitherto has been carried on in the study rather than in the swampy ditches

³ EDWARD KÖNIG, *Bibel und Babel*, eine kulturgeschichtliche Skizze. Berlin: Warneck, 1902; pp. 50; M. o.80.

⁴ PETER JENSEN, "Babel und Bibel," in *Die christliche Welt*, No. XXI, May 22, 1902.

of oriental excavations. And if, in addition to this, he has succeeded in creating an interest that shall keep wide open the treasury of the German empire and stimulate to many voluntary gifts, for the good work begun, then the purpose of his lecture has been most agreeably accomplished.

But now, what have we in this paper and what demands does it make upon us? To the first question, supposing all have read it, we would of course not all give the same answer. So far as I am concerned, I came across a dozen new illustrations, but, aside from an occasional fresh interpretation, there was hardly a fact or theory mentioned that was new to me. Even the appearance of names having "Yahweh" as one of their elements, on clay tablets of the first Babylonian dynasty, about 2250 B. C., which Delitzsch, to give special emphasis, reserved for the close of his paper,⁵ was made known to us by Sayce and Hommel in 1898.⁶ And, though I, as an Old Testament scholar, might be expected to belong to the better informed in these matters, yet presumably in a theological conference like the present there are few who have not long since become familiar with most of what Delitzsch says. The paper, of course, both in form and material, was designed for the laity and could count upon so much deeper an impression upon Delitzsch's audience, the less they had known up to that time of the excavations on the Euphrates and Tigris. And certainly one should commend the candor with which certain truths are stated that have long since become commonplaces with us, but which in the leading ecclesiastical circles are often still treated as detestable heresies. I need mention only the composite structure of the Pentateuch "from a series of very various sources;"⁷ the dependence of large portions of the primitive account of creation, the flood, and the table of the Sethites on Babylonian myths;⁸ likewise the futility of all attempts to harmonize our biblical account of the creation of the world with the results of modern science.⁹ It would seem

⁵ P. 46. König strongly doubts (pp. 40 ff. of his brochure) this reading, but in the main there is perhaps no reason to do so.

⁶ *The Expository Times*, 1897-98, p. 522; 1898-99, pp. 42, 48; cf. also 1899-1900, p. 270.

⁷ P. 32.

⁸ Pp. 29 f., 32 f.

⁹ P. 34.

even to be commendable that a representative of secular science should demand (I quote verbally) that "through the excision from our religious thought of these purely human conceptions [inclusive of the belief in demons and the devil], and through the liberation of our thinking from its many and tenacious prejudices, we should develop more perfectly and spiritually true religion, and the truly religious life as taught by the prophets and poets of the Old Testament, and especially by Jesus."¹⁰

What Delitzsch asks of us in return for all these contributions is, as already indicated in the last quotation, to recognize and utilize the results of the excavations for a better understanding and appreciation of the Holy Scriptures, especially the Old Testament. He himself promises, certainly somewhat boldly, as a result of the fulfilment of this desire of his—or, to speak more accurately, through the recognition of the fruitful work on the Old Testament rising out of the excavations—that a greater impress will be made upon mankind and a more significant advance secured for the "life of man and the nations than has come through all the modern discoveries in the natural sciences taken together."¹¹ Be that as it may, every unprejudiced person will be glad to do his part in bringing about such results. Still, we must be allowed to look a little more closely at what is included in the program. At first sight, Delitzsch's demands do not seem unreasonably great, but the farther one follows the subject, the more question marks one feels compelled to insert; if we pay some attention to the hints of wider connections, the proposition involves a great deal more than we at first thought. It is certainly an unwarranted use of facts to announce as incontestable that "in the last instance we owe all those blessings issuing from sabbath or Sunday rest to that ancient civilization on the Euphrates and Tigris."¹² That "the sacrificial and priestly element in the Old Testament is deeply affected by the Babylonian"¹³ can, rightly understood, probably be acknowledged; but it looks as if Delitzsch meant to accept the far too great claims of Paul Haupt. Unmistakably he does accept at the end of his paper Winckler's theory of the Canaanitish origin of the

¹⁰ Pp. 43 f.¹¹ P. 4.¹² P. 29.¹³ P. 28.

first Babylonian dynasty in the latter half of the third millennium before Christ. And no less unmistakably does he there commit himself to Hommel's theory of the monotheism of these Canaanitish (or, according to Hommel, Arabian) conquerors.¹⁴ They called God *El*, which is, according to the confidently accepted interpretation of Lagarde, "goal." This goal, concludes Delitzsch, can only be one, hence the beautiful proper names of the time, "God Has Given," "God With Me," "In the Help of My God I Walk," are a confession of belief in the *one* God. And this "*one* God" the Canaanitish tribes already call "Yahweh," *i. e.*, "The One Who Is," "The Abiding One," who not, like us men, will be tomorrow a thing of yesterday, but who dwells above the canopy of the stars that shine with ceaseless regularity, and who is active from eternity to eternity. "This 'Yahweh,' then, is a primitive inheritance of those Canaanitish tribes from which in later centuries the twelve tribes of Israel were to spring." It would be unreasonable to demand of such swelling and enthusiastic words translucent clearness; but that Delitzsch here accepts in the main Winckler's and Hommel's results can hardly be doubted, any more than that thereby the Old Testament completely loses its significance as religious history.

Our reference to the scholars mentioned makes it evident that the demands of Delitzsch are nothing new to Old Testament students. For more than thirty years we have endeavored to meet them. And today in this noble city we celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the first book which was a real help in that direction. It was in 1872, here in Giessen, that the book *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament* issued for the first time from the publishing house of J. Ricker. It was a very valuable work of the great master of German Assyriology, Eberhard Schrader, who was at the time professor of the Old Testament in the theological faculty of this university. How things have changed since that time may be most clearly measured by that book, for the third edition, having meanwhile changed its place of publication to Berlin, bears the date of the current year, 1902. To acquaint ourselves with the problems which the excavations

¹⁴ P. 46.

today present to the Old Testament, let us first of all follow this book, which deals with the subject thoroughly and in detail, rather than delay upon the mere hints beyond which Delitzsch's paper naturally could not go. If what we find there cannot be directly generalized, yet it will not be difficult to make a practical application to other conditions.

Schrader unhappily was incapacitated for all scientific work through a stroke of paralysis. He had to leave his work to younger hands, and two distinguished Assyriologists, Heinrich Zimmern and Hugo Winckler, whom we have already mentioned so often, have taken his place. This has caused a complete change in the form of the work, which is now organized upon an altogether different plan. The addition which the title has received, viz., "including the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and the New Testament," will be welcomed by everybody, and need not affect in any way the characteristics of the book. However, from the first half of the work "History and Geography," by Hugo Winckler,¹⁵ published toward the close of last year, it appears that the misgivings, which many others must have felt as well as myself, regarding a complete change of the commentary-like form of the original work, have been justified in such a way as no one would have expected. The preface promises that, as far as possible, only the really established results of the study of the cuneiform inscriptions will be presented, and that the difference between documentary evidence and only more or less probable inductions will always be made unmistakably apparent. But both promises are so little fulfilled that instead of the title, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, it would better be called "The Cuneiform Scholar and the Old Testament." Winckler lets every other nationality in ancient western Asia be swallowed up by Babylonian culture. Whatever they might have had of individuality they contributed to the great sun-hearth Babylon in order to receive it back transfigured with its glory. In the strong conviction that he cannot possibly meet with anything that is not at heart of Babylonian origin,

¹⁵ *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*. Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1902; pp. viii + 342, 8vo.

Winckler believes that he can dispense with proof in detail, and at once proceeds to work over the given tradition from the Babylonian point of view, as he understands it, until it becomes almost unrecognizable. This explains that he is not, like Schrader before him, silent about those Israelitish kings for whose connection with the land of the two rivers there is no documentary evidence, but has the most to say about them, and especially of Saul, David, and Solomon, and can thus furnish us a connected Israelitish history from his point of view.

That Canaan, and with it, to the northeast, that strip of civilized country which connects it in a semicircle with the land of the two rivers, was already in the second millennium B. C., before the immigration of the Israelites, saturated with Babylonian civilization—or, as Delitzsch expresses it in his paper, was “completely a domain of Babylonian culture”¹⁶—we have accustomed ourselves, since the discovery and decipherment of the Tell-el-Amarna tablets, to consider as an axiom in no need of further proof. But still we comforted ourselves that Arabia, the mysterious cradle of the Semitic family of nations, remained tolerably unaffected by the leveling influence of this advanced civilization, and that it was able, till a late period, to produce purely Semitic tribes, indigenous and full of natural vitality. For Winckler this is only a scientific legend, which he sweeps away by the assertion and attempted proof that “Arabia was as open to the western Asiatic civilization in the remotest ages as in the time of Islam;”¹⁷ that Babylonianism held sway there in the second and third millenniums B. C., as much as anywhere else in western Asia.¹⁸ At the foundation of this civilization lies the Babylonian religion, which dominated completely the intellectual life, and especially its highest expression, the literature, of the people.

With these presuppositions Winckler approaches the Old Testament. Not only do they give him the explanation of the primitive history and patriarchal legends, but he also treats the

¹⁶ P. 28.

¹⁷ *Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament (KAT.)*³, p. 137.

¹⁸ Compare here also *Arabisch-Semitisch-Orientalisch*, 1. Lieferung (“Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft,” 1901, No. 4), a publication of Winckler’s which has appeared since the writing of this paper.

period of the kings according to the same pre-established scheme of mythology, and at once with ease opens all its seals. Strangely enough, this procedure and point of view cease suddenly with Solomon, or, in another place,¹⁹ with Rehoboam. From thence, excepting only an occasional mythological flash, we have plain political history. This cannot be due to lack of sufficient remoteness in time, for the oldest historical narrative, according to Winckler the source "E," dates, in his opinion, from the time of Ahaz, toward the close of the northern kingdom.²⁰ This would leave abundant time for the growth of myths. Nor can it be attributed to any increased clearness of the age, for in his view the history of the Persian empire and that of Alexander the Great, etc., are subject to the same mythological tendencies. Indeed, as he informs us,²¹ "a glance at the oriental theory of the world shows that it *always* relates even historical fact in the form of mythology." Nor is it the fault of the brevity of the records or the lack of material, for at least for the time of Ahab and his dynasty we are especially fortunate in this matter. However, let us keep to the earlier periods. What is Winckler's law or formula of the mythological way of writing history?²²

According to this law the ancient historian must prove that the periods of the kings, of the judges, and of the patriarchs form the counterpart of the heavenly cycle. For the periods of time and history are presented as the workings of the providence of the gods. As they reveal themselves in the movements of the heavenly bodies, and as the phenomena of nature make them manifest, so kings, as their representatives on earth, correspond to them, and their fortunes follow those of their respective gods. The scheme of the heavenly cycle, with which we have to do, is that of the superior gods: the moon (as father), the sun (as son), and the morning star (as daughter). Yet the cycle does not therefore consist of three units. For nature runs her course in two parts, summer and winter, and accordingly each of the three great divinities can divide itself into two persons. It is a peculiarity of the "Canaanitish" family of nations, to

¹⁹ *Geschichte Israels*, Vol. II, p. 287.

²⁰ *KAT* 3, p. 222.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 223.

which Israel belongs, that they let this division take place regularly with the third divinity, so that she is divided into the two sides of nature, summer and winter. In this way the cycle receives four units. Under this conception Saul appears in the tradition as the moon, Jonathan as the sun, David as the one and Solomon as the other half of the year; that is, their whole history is so interpreted and twisted in the accounts that a relation to the corresponding deity is made out. Since along with this theory Winckler insists emphatically upon the historicity of the kernel, it necessarily becomes the task of the historian to free this kernel from its mythological incasing. With such certainty about the aims of the latter this is an easy and delightful task. Historical reality must here have worked hand in hand with mythology—an unhappy coincidence which Winckler himself does not seem to fear. These are the broad outlines of the new key to ancient history which Winckler makes use of. The merit of its discovery does not belong to him, but, as he himself indicates,²³ to Ed. Stucken, who is publishing a great work, "Astral-Myths of the Hebrews, Babylonians, and Egyptians,"²⁴ of which the first volume, "Abraham," appeared in 1896, the second, "Lot," in 1897, the third, "Jacob," in 1899, and the fourth, "Esau," in 1901. We, who are interested in a right understanding of the Bible, shall not be able to accuse Winckler that he kept us waiting too long from profiting by this discovery.

Staggering discoveries of this sort, which repeat themselves at intervals everywhere, are generally difficult to combat directly, even when one is positively convinced that they are untenable. But what makes their refutation so difficult is the best indirect proof of their weakness. I mean the lack of logical consistency; the innumerable possibilities, liberties, and assumptions; in a word, the side doors of every kind, which have to be kept open to make the theory applicable to every case and to the most refractory material. This happens also to Winckler's theory, which he had already elaborated more in detail in the second volume of his *History of Israel*, published in 1900. Here only a

²³ *Geschichte Israels*, Vol. II, p. 276.

²⁴ *Astralmythen der Hebräer, Babylonier und Aegypter*. Leipzig: Pfeiffer.

few examples may be given. Where we first learn from Winckler that the earth is a reflection of heaven,²⁵ he tells us that each god has his *τέμενος* or "templum" in the heavens, and that there is on earth a district corresponding to it which is the land belonging to his temple. This is *his land* in which he rules as lord. This is not so bad and can perhaps be proven. For Marduk is unquestionably the lord of Babylon. The moon-god Sin is lord of Ur and Haran; Ba'al Melkart, of Tyre; Astarte, of Byblos; etc. Since kings are the representatives of cities and countries, one might conclude that in the dynasties of a country there would be reflected the fates and doings of its ruling gods. Instead, however, according to the above law, the local reign is interfered with by the temporal, as is shown later, so that in Babylon, the city of the sun, the moon and morning star meddle with the affairs of its lord. In Haran, the city of the moon, the sun and morning star, and in Byblos, the city of Venus, the sun and moon do the same. It almost seems as if Winckler originally meant to give preference to the scheme following countries and peoples, for the three patriarchs of Israel—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—are moon-heroes. The theory of a threefold beginning of the series is dragged in by the ears. Abraham represents the moon-god during the period of Gemini; his "image" Isaac represents him during Taurus, and Jacob when springtime comes in the constellation of the Ram. This latter is quite regular, because the eighth century B. C., in which the writer lived, already belongs to this period of time.²⁶ But what in all the world has the patriarch Jacob to do with the time of his biographer, and did not Abraham and Isaac play a mythical rôle at least as early as that? Nevertheless, in addition to this explanation and without concern about it, we are presented with still another. The moon-hero, Abraham, has at his side a brother-dioscuros, originally the sun, which must not be identified with him.²⁷ His sister and wife, Sarah, "according to her nature, is clearly the Istar of Babylonian mythology. Abraham in his rôle is here both her brother and husband Tammuz-Adonis." In this way, Abraham being counted twice, the four-

²⁵ *KAT* 3, pp. 157 f.²⁶ *Geschichte Israels*, Vol. II, p. 284.²⁷ *Ibid.*

fold cycle would happily be reached, and be closed already in the first patriarch, who thereby, of course, gets into immediate danger of becoming a sun-hero. But Winckler actually goes on to say: "As they [Abraham and Sarah] are brother and sister, they must have one father. This is the moon-god Sin among the Babylonians. We therefore conclude that the divinity, as whose representative this Abraham is to be esteemed, is essentially the moon-god."²⁸ This exposition makes it seem very possible that on this mythological soil one may be at the same time both himself and his own father. But still more license is taken. Every one of the three divinities "contains also its sexual counterpart, so that we also have a female moon- and sun-god and a male Venus divinity." Indeed, as we have already seen, this is the rule for the Old Testament, which belongs to the "Canaanitish" region. There, instead of the higher divinity, Istar-Venus, her male counterpart,²⁹ Tammuz, the two divisions of the year, takes her place. If, now, we remember that this same Tammuz, the Adonis of the Greeks, is the zodiac,³⁰ and that, in fact, the sun and Venus-Istar are presented in the relation of brother-husband,³¹ we have further freedom granted that the sun-god, of the second rank, can in another form take also the third and even the third and fourth place.

With what ease all kinds of transitions and substitutions take place appears again in the continuation of the patriarchal legends. After the series has commenced for the third time with Jacob, who is the moon-hero, it continues next with Esau, the Geminus, who is the sun, notwithstanding the fact that he is not Jacob's son, but his brother; for, says Winckler, "the sun is given various positions in different systems." It is true, Jacob's son Joseph also bears the characteristics of the sun-god, but, since the sun-god has already found a place, Joseph takes the Tammuz myths and unites both forms in himself when he is cast into the *bôr* (the pit) and is again "exalted"³² from it. But even this is not the end. Joseph, on the other hand, represents also

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 23. ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²⁹ *KAT*, p. 223.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

³² *Geschichte Israels*, Vol. II, p. 284.

Tammuz sunk into the netherworld, because he dies in Egypt, which corresponds to the southern region of the heavens occupied by the sun in winter, when Tammuz is dead. Moses, who only arrives at the border of the "land," is the sun in spring, *i. e.*, from the winter solstice to the vernal equinox. Joshua, the sun of Nûn, *i. e.*, "the fish," takes the next quarter to the summer solstice, because the ascending sun emerges from the sign Pisces. And lastly the summer sun is Caleb, whose name *keleb*, "dog," points to the dog star, Sirius, which reaches its culmination at the same time as the sun. This unfolding of the system is interesting, because the cycle is enlarged from four to six places, and still more so because Istar-Tammuz now appears in winter, beginning to rule from the autumnal equinox, instead of in summer, from the vernal equinox, as should have been the case according to Winckler's rule.³³ Did these exceptions later seem too far-reaching to Winckler himself? In the new book, two years since the latter scheme was proposed,³⁴ we read that Jacob-Israel is the moon, Joseph the sun, Moses the *Dôd*, *i. e.*, Tammuz in spring, Joshua Shalm-Nebo, *i. e.*, Tammuz in winter.³⁵ Esau has now been dropped altogether. It goes without saying that the life-history of these heroes, according to this law, corresponds completely to that of the gods whom they represent in the different schemes. These examples show sufficiently that Winckler's law does not lack elasticity. In fact, the whole thing makes the impression that the historians could have taken it much easier and might have left things as they happened to find them in the traditions at hand. They could always have defended the mythological orthodoxy of their accounts by the many possible variations of this inviolable law.

Of much greater importance, of course, are these discoveries or inventions in their application to the history of the time of the kings. Here we meet this fourfold cycle: moon, sun, Tammuz in summer, and Tammuz in winter, in Saul, Jonathan, David, and Solomon. Notwithstanding that these are historical personages, yet, we are informed, they were never known by these names. They bear divine names. Only of Solomon do we also

³³ *KAT*.³, p. 223.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

know his real name, Daduja or Jedidja.³⁶ Time does not permit me to enter further upon this especially pathless thicket. But does not the complete substitution of earthly by heavenly names run counter to the method itself, for it was intended to portray the history of the earthly and not of the heavenly rulers? Moreover, one does not see why Jonathan should be put into the series of kings, nor why, by a curious exception, he is allowed to retain a purely human name. Otherwise also the half would frequently be more than the whole. And just as was the case with the patriarchs, so here also doubles appear. Istar, who has abdicated in favor of her husband, *i. e.*, David-Solomon, appears again in her own person in Bathsheba, the pretended mother of Jedidja-Solomon, who in reality is the son of Abigail. And with less disguise, under one of her own names even, does she appear in David's daughter Tamar, being forced by her brother Amnon. That is the myth of Istar's marriage with her brother, the sun-god. Her Istar-character appears plainly in the cake she bakes, which otherwise is "baked for Aštoret, queen of the heavens."³⁷ One would think that thereby Amnon would become Istar, for the cake was baked for him; but such inversions are not surprising in this kind of exposition.

In all that I have said I have not yet mentioned the most serious defect of the latest edition of the book *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*. Up to this point (whether justly or not is another question) everything is derived from the inscriptions from Babylonian antiquity. But innumerable other hypotheses of Winckler, that have nothing to do with the inscriptions, are woven together with those inferences into a finished historical portrait. They are mere generalizations from the biblical texts after Winckler's peculiar method. The book in question is really nothing more than a summary of his former works. As a matter of fact, reference is made to them much more frequently than to the inscriptions themselves, or to Schrader's "Cuneiform Collection," as the preface had promised us. Every Old Testament student values Winckler as a fellow-

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 224 f.; *Geschichte Israels*, Vol. II, pp. 224 f.

³⁷ *Geschichte Israels*, Vol. II, pp. 227 f.

laborer, and will be ready fully to acknowledge his acumen, his inexhaustible gift of combination, and his astonishing capacity of work. Especially he who speaks to you today will be free from any suspicion of depreciating Winckler, since he has so often publicly acknowledged his merits. But the theories proposed in his "Old Testament Investigations,"³⁸ his "Ancient Oriental Studies,"³⁹ his "History of Israel,"⁴⁰ in the "Reports of the Hither-Asiatic Society,"⁴¹ and other places, which are the result of a highly endowed, but far too active, subjectivity, must not be put into the library of student or pastor as the only complete handbook in which he may expect to find the assured results of the study of the monuments. Step by step we see how Winckler at first puts forth the most daring hypotheses merely as such, but forthwith on their basis goes on to further conclusions and inferences, so that after a few pages the airy foundation on which the stately structure rests is forgotten. Such a method may be excused, or is at least intelligible, in an altogether new science with constantly increasing material, as is Assyriology. There guessing riddles is the chief thing, and if a wrong guess is made no harm is done; the next day may make it right again. But in an old science like ours, with limited, but solid and carefully preserved, traditions, this cannot be allowed. It is pan-Babylonianism that now lays its giant fist upon the Old Testament, and makes it simply a province, a mere introduction, to the cuneiform inscriptions, as, according to Delitzsch's statement, Canaan was completely a province of Babylonian civilization in the second millennium B. C. What of the monotheism of the Yahweh religion? It sprang from a monotheistic movement of the great motherland. What of prophetism? The *nēbi'im* are simply the political agents of the world-power. So vanishes everything that we were proud to possess in the Old Testament.

I did not intend to speak only of the monuments of the land of the two rivers, though they have by far the pre-eminence and perhaps always will have. From every new quarter where

³⁸ *Alttestamentliche Untersuchungen.*

³⁹ *Altorientalische Forschungen.*

⁴⁰ *Geschichte Israels.*

⁴¹ "Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft."

monuments are unearthed we must expect assaults, especially so long as the finds are recent. The arrogant use which has been made of the few monuments from south Arabia that have hitherto come to light leads us to expect a veritable deluge so soon as Ed. Glaser's accumulated treasures shall become current. A determined purpose and a little self-confident imagination are sufficient to forge a key, with which to unlock all the doors of the Old Testament, from the materials found in any of the countries adjacent to Canaan. I can illustrate this by a true story which is not without its irony. A few years since a prominent and competent university professor (I intentionally withhold the name of his department in order to make conjecture impossible) sent me a small book privately printed. It set out to prove that the narrative portions of the Hexateuch and the older historical books of the Old Testament, to about the same extent as in Winckler's mythological scheme of Babylon, were taken to the minutest details from Egyptian mythology. The author sent the book with the request that I would read it and tell him frankly whether I could advise its publication or not. I can assure you, it showed no less ability and skill than Winckler and his school manifest in their derivations from Babylonian mythology. The wonderful correspondence between the Old Testament narratives and their Egyptian originals was enough to make one dizzy; nevertheless the unnaturalness of such artificial and forced dependence was sure soon to appear. I did my best to show my gratitude toward the trust my colleague reposed in me, by a plain statement of my objections. My trouble was abundantly repaid by a communication from the author, wherein he stated that he had decided not to publish his discovery. Possibly another thing, which had just happened, helped to tip the balance in this decision. Not long before I had reviewed in an English journal the work of a classical archæologist who claimed to have discovered that in ancient Greece there was an imageless worship of God, and incidentally gave an explanation of the ark of the covenant in the Old Testament. Soon after, the editors of the journal sent me an English manuscript which they had rejected. It opposed with

great zeal both myself and the book reviewed, and went on to prove that the Old Testament legends were derived from old Irish myths, as well as that the migration of mankind and the occupation of the lands in high antiquity took place, not from southeast to northwest, but from northwest to southeast—from Ireland over Gaul, Spain, and north Africa to Egypt and Asia.

The thing is perhaps harmless, but not quite so ridiculous as it may seem. My two stories would make but little impression on Winckler. He would simply turn the tables and let the movement begin in the East, with Babylon, and would not be in the least surprised if the common mythological foundation should reappear at each station of the journey as far even as Ireland. But two things are to be remembered: neither the representative of Egypt nor that of Ireland had Winckler's mythological scheme. They did not agree with each other, nor with any one of their predecessors in the last century who have made us happy with systems of Hebrew mythology, now sunk into oblivion. Let this be enough to prove how much room there still remains for the active imagination of individuals. Winckler himself can testify to it, and that we set it down to his credit. In the preface to the second volume of his *History of Israel*, dated August 18, 1900, he makes the following statement: "The work now made public was written toward the end of 1898. It was finished December 20 of that year. It then lay undisturbed for a year, and I had already decided to let it ripen not only *nonum in annum*, but forever." But as foundation and support for the new edition of Schrader's work he has now published it. If at first he thought of keeping it to himself, there can have been no other reason than the conviction of the impossibility, or doubts as to the possibility, of arriving at assured and therefore convincing results in this way. It is evident that in this manner any unity of the ancient tradition must infallibly be broken up into as many forms as there are inventive geniuses to explain it. For that two minds should happen to light upon the same explanation is next to impossible.

With this state of things we would reluctantly have to be content, and should be left to mourn the disparagement of our

treasured tradition, if this interpretation had to be acknowledged as right in principle. But that is not the case. This I now proceed to show as briefly as possible, first with reference to the cuneiform inscriptions and then to the Old Testament. To begin with Winckler's peculiar theory. His mythological scheme cannot be found in Babylon itself; much less is it accepted by other Assyriologists. Moreover, the authorities upon the historical works that deal with Alexander the Great, upon which he depends so fully, do not accept his theory. The Alexander romance, in spite of all the tales and folklore current at the time, can be distinguished from them and does not at all follow a ready-made mythological scheme, but throws together materials from the most distant places and times into hopeless confusion.⁴²

A great deal too much has been inferred from the Tell-el-Amarna letters. The most noteworthy fact is the prevalence from the Euphrates to the Nile of the Babylonian language and script in the diplomatic correspondence during the second millennium. But it means no more than that national development and lively intercourse had made a diplomatic language a necessity. Since this was so, each little city-tyrant, from pure conceit, was bound to provide himself with a scribe who understood and wrote, perfectly or imperfectly, that language. This is no criterion for the state of intelligence and the extent of the penetration of Babylonian culture among the mass of the people.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter in Winckler's new book is the one entitled "State and Administration," in which he paints in glowing colors the intercourse of ideas in western Asia. If we were to admit it all, which is by no means necessary, nothing would yet be proven for such a dependence upon Babylonian culture during pre-Israelite times in Canaan, as he holds. And that least of all in religion. It is altogether improbable, and all that we know goes to show the contrary, that ancient Canaan should have had in common with Babylon, or taken over as a *system*, the star-worship of Babylon or

⁴² N. KRALL, "Der griechische Alexanderroman," Beilage zur *Allgemeinen Zeitung*, 1901, No. 38, February 15.

made such application of it as Winckler presupposes. The Baals of Canaan have other roots, no matter how many connections in that direction can be made out. Still less can such an intellectual dependence be affirmed for ancient Arabia. The Arabian, or Canaanitish, home of the so-called first Babylonian dynasty is inferred solely from the formation of the names of most of its rulers. But they are of true Babylonian origin, according to the information I have received from Peter Jensen.⁴³ The inscriptions call this very dynasty the "Babylonian" in contradistinction from all early and even primitive dynasties. Winckler's claim for the active intercourse between Babylonia and Arabia rests upon the solitary statement that King Gudea about 2500 B. C. got the stone for his statues from Makan, *i. e.*, according to Jensen, Arabia in general, and, according to Winckler's own interpretation, "eastern Arabia."⁴⁴ If one thinks of Arabia's eastern mountain chain⁴⁵ (and only a fool would fetch stone farther than he must), it is intelligible enough for the lower Euphrates district; but it certainly does not prove that all Arabia, and especially its western portion, which alone concerns us, was saturated with Babylonian culture. Far too much capital is made of the name-formations, where the exceeding uncertainty with which many Old Testament names have come down in the tradition and the great latitude involved in the mutation of sounds and signs into other languages are utilized to the utmost. All the peoples concerned have a large linguistic stock of roots and formations in common, so that conditions are favorable for the independent origin of like names. Besides, names may migrate without giving guarantee of retaining their original meaning. Winckler also is aware of it and points it out in the case of the oft-recurring name "Yahweh" in different countries.⁴⁶ But very dubious are the explanations arrived at through the medium of appellative surnames and predicates, a favorite device of Winckler's. *Dôd*, "beloved," whether it can be established or not, is certainly a good cognomen of Tammuz,

⁴³ Cf. now also his essay in *Die christliche Welt*.

⁴⁴ *KAT.* 3, p. 15.

⁴⁵ Of course this could be decided by a comparison of the rock.

⁴⁶ *KAT.* 3, p. 209.

the beloved of Istar. Nevertheless it is the first of all, also in the sense of "relative," a word used in everyday intercourse, and, therefore, in the changed form *Dawîd* is no proof at all for the divine nature or character of its bearer, King David. And that the moon-god frequently has the by-name *bêl purussê*, "the oracle-god,"⁴⁷ does not prove that *Ša'ûl*, interpreted as "the inquired of," is a name for the moon-god, instead of simply "the petitioned one," *i. e.*, the prayed-for son, either in general or from a particular god, whose name, as frequently, is lost. Countless interpretations of such doubtful nature show the artificiality of these systems.

The same is true of the numbers. Of all units between 2 and 7, even if arrived at through addition, not one escapes Winckler's astrological interpretation,⁴⁸ and for many he offers a choice of more than one. In the same way he interprets other phenomena. Mythology in general deals with the simplest relations of life—with the family and its vicissitudes. Human relations and experiences which lie near at hand are, therefore, the sure prey of the mythologist. One cannot have a brother or wife without becoming his victim.

Now, these objections are not ignorantly, nor arrogantly, aimed at mythology and mythological interpretation as such, but only against its abuse. It should be possible to define its limits. Every statement has a subject and a predicate. We cannot make mythological interpretation apply to one part only. If the *acting person*, the subject, is a mythological figure, his activity, however human, must also be regarded as mythological. If the *action*, the predicate, has a mythological character, then we may, with some caution at least, infer an underlying mythological idea on the part of its originator. But where a person is unquestionably historical and his activities move in circles corresponding to this personality in actual life, it should take a great deal of evidence before we reject the plain meaning of words.

And lastly, myths certainly have a tendency to migrate, but

⁴⁷ Intentionally I assume throughout the correctness of the reading and interpretation of such names and appellatives.

⁴⁸ *Geschichte Israels*, Vol. II, pp. 279 ff.

they do not move as organized armies. They start on their migrations singly, whenever the moving principle is unconscious life and growth, and not artificial and literary transplanting. In thousands of cases in these migrations they change their inmost nature, so that at their final resting-place they are often no longer myths, but have become fairy stories and tales, which easily attach themselves also to unquestionably historical personalities without giving them a mythological tinge, because people have lost all knowledge of their mythological nature. These are everyday truths which may be called to mind as a warning to caution and moderation against sweeping generalizations. They teach us that an individual treatment of the materials is necessary.

To this individual treatment of Old Testament history we are the more justified, and even urged, by the fact of the uniqueness of Israel and its literature. Briefly to explain this let me begin with calling attention to a most valuable admission of Winckler's, which sounds almost like a self-contradiction or retraction. He says on p. 212: "As people and individuals do not retain the reminiscences and clear conceptions of the conditions and events of prehistoric times, so neither does Israel-Judah. A popular tradition soon takes on a form corresponding to new conditions of life. The mind of the peasant, attached to the soil, knows no longer of the nomadic life of his ancestor. Where such reminiscences nevertheless appear, they can be the result only of later learned speculations. These, of course, can have no more historical value for us than the speculations of mediæval scholars about the origin of the Germans." But a little farther down, on p. 220, he says: "Throughout the whole ancient conception of history the autochthonous theory prevails, and if Israel, with its immigration legend, is apparently an exception, we have in it the traces of a vivid recollection of facts, while the autochthonous theory is represented by the patriarchal legends." This admission is in itself valuable, though Winckler has a view of the actual immigration different from that found in tradition. Israel *knew*—a very unique exception among the nations that play a part in the history of the world—that it had immigrated into its land

It remained conscious of this difference and thereby protested against being placed on the same level with the other inhabitants of the same land. This consciousness proves its right to a higher place, and this right, especially under so difficult conditions as Israel found them in Canaan, could only be preserved through the medium of the religion peculiar to itself, *i. e.*, Yahwism. This would hold good even if Judah, as Winckler believes, received its god first through David and the North even a great deal later than Judah, which, of course, is impossible.

In the history of Yahwism we can trace the national individuality of Israel in all essentials unmixed with that of other nations. That we are able to do this is due, in the first place, to the uniqueness of the tradition at our disposal. We cannot appreciate enough that it was not written down at *one* stroke, is not the work of a single systematizing mind, but is worked up out of a series of sources which can easily be distinguished and differentiated as to time. We have every reason to defend the results, won by a century's honest labor of differentiating the sources, against the easy discoveries by which Winckler would turn everything upside down. Likewise, we must defend it against all other pious wishes in these days of unbridled speculation. The second priceless and abiding possession in this field is the certainty with which the date of Deuteronomy has been fixed, and the possibility of determining what preceded and what followed it. And in the older material we can again distinguish earlier and later portions. Thus we are led up to times which in themselves furnish a tolerably certain guarantee for the independence and trustworthiness of the tradition. And even more important is it that we can determine the underlying forces which led to the repeated working over of the ancient tradition. Do we find here, as Winckler assumes, the influence of the great civilization on the Euphrates and Tigris which flooded and overpowered everything? The answer is both "yes" and "no," but we can precisely define them both. Between the two ancient sources, *i. e.*, from J to E, Babylonia is *not* the bridge. Tribal and local differences, and, above all, the Yahweh-prophetism of the northern kingdom, come here into play. Faith in Yahweh's

supreme power and the conscience awakened to feel the need of an absolute morality expresses itself. Only in the later strata of E there is a weakening of faith in the kingdom and national ideals.

In the relation of Deuteronomy to E the influence of Babylon is seen; but, so far as the authors are conscious of it, it is only in opposition and with perfect abhorrence. With a shudder they reject everything that comes from the Euphrates and Tigris. This, to be sure, is the reaction against the experience of this influence which had been so dangerous from the time of Ahaz to Josiah, and still more so under the reign of Manasseh. It is of the greatest significance that we find Babylonian and Assyrian civilization affecting Israel in a much greater degree so soon as there is an immediate contact between the two nations. This was at the time of the hither-Asiatic campaigns of Tiglath-Pileser III., and even more so after the time of Sargon and Sennacherib. We have to do, not, as Winckler describes, with a constant, but with an intermittent stream, though at the same time some stray undercurrents may also have been continually at work. That this should have been so will, least of all, surprise us Germans, who, in spite of much more favorable geographical and historical conditions, have been affected in such varying degrees at different times by the civilization of France.

Different from its influence in Deuteronomy does Babylonian influence appear in Israel's literature in the later and earlier strata of the Yahwistic source, in J² and J¹. Whether we rejoice in it or lament over it, we cannot escape the fact that the oldest strata of J did not know the story of the flood. But the second, J², as well as the Priest document (P), has it and makes the whole primitive history revolve around it. As it does not concern itself with myths limited to tribes and districts, but with the whole human race, it proves, no matter how much it may be turned or twisted, that at the time when J² was composed, *i. e.*, about 800 B. C., Israel had not yet the legend of the flood. From this, again, it follows that this legend, along with others, which certainly came from the land of the two rivers, was not introduced till the time of the high

pressure of political influence from Assyria, *i. e.*, during the period when Judah was a vassal kingdom of Assyria, about 700 B. C. And, inversely, it proves that *ancient Israel*, though both itself and the land in which it found its new home were exposed for a millennium and a half to Babylonian influence, did not take over *in toto* Babylon's mythological treasures; and what it *did* receive it changed materially.

This is evident even from the cycle of myths which Winckler, with Stucken and others, accepts all but exclusively, *i. e.*, the astral or sidereal myths. For we know from indisputable, mutually corroborating sources that Babylonian star-worship and Babylonian star-knowledge found, to be sure, entrance into Israel, but as something new, as something which had not been known hitherto, and was unmistakably felt to be foreign, finding entrance at the same late period when the legend of the flood was taken over. This makes it impossible, though unconscious sidereal material was present in Israel, that already in the oldest accounts a complete astral system, coming from Babylon, should have been the controlling principle. We see well enough now why Winckler desires to place all detailed historical accounts after the time of Ahaz.

But a second time we can lay hold of the influence of Babylonia on Old Testament literature. It is at the time when the intellectually active portion of the people lived in captivity in Babylonia itself. Notwithstanding the solicitous particularism of Ezekiel and the Priest document in the Hexateuch, the Babylonian influence comes plainly to light in the content and form of the laws, and also in its theory of the world and the narrative portions. Again, therefore, the intellectual approach is conditioned by the bodily, the immediate political contact.

For the evidence that comes to us from the historical books the prophetic books are the test, enabling us to follow the separate stages of development from 750 to 450 on the basis of documentary evidence that can be dated with certainty. This means that just for the period of Israel's most powerful development we have excellent sources, and that the forces at work are in full view. The result is that we behold Israel's inherent and

native power maintaining the upper hand, and that, while influences from without are present, they pass through a fermentation and are worked over into an organic process, so that Israel's individuality is not extinguished.

These indisputable facts allow the inference that in times when Canaan was not under the direct political influence of Assyria it was also little affected by its civilization. And from this again it follows that Israel, just at the time when it became a nation and received its abiding impress, developed itself quite independently. The outside influences came chiefly from the immediate neighborhood. This justifies us, without too much overconfidence, of having a ready trust in the essential truth of our tradition. We can account for the pride and joyful exuberance with which the younger sisters of our Old Testament science look down upon it, because they deal with monuments and with documents, while we must content ourselves with a literature that has passed through innumerable hands. It is not strange that as an unavoidable transition there should be manifested a boundless skepticism toward the Old Testament. We can understand the Proteus-like transformations in which a modern haggada, based upon real or imaginary insight received from the monuments, attempts to lord it over or instruct the Old Testament tradition. But we are not confounded by it. We have learned through honest labor to study our sources and to understand them. Babylonian literature may swell up into infinity, but it will have nothing to equal our prophets, nor even the historical portions of our oldest sources. Grateful as we, the representatives of Old Testament science, are to the excavations for each new ray of light and every enlargement of the scope of ancient history, we do not yet feel that the time has come to let our beautiful village be swallowed up over night, so to speak, by the metropolis of Babylon; much less are we inclined to ask for this incorporation ourselves. To march separately and, where opportunity offers, to join hands—that shall be our motto also in the future.